

STATINTL

SEAGULL WISDOM

Mr. FULBRIGHT. Mr. President, the discussion in the Senate in the last weeks has been a realistic reminder that we human beings have a very difficult time getting along together on this earth. Controversies and strife are man's daily lot in life. Nearly every day some new crisis arises to threaten the tranquillity and serenity of our society.

Perhaps if we would look about we might learn from other inhabitants of this terrestrial sphere who have done a much better job than we have in learning to live at peace with one another.

I recently came across an article in June-July issue of National Wildlife magazine on the mores and mating habits of seagulls. My initial reaction to the article was that I had learned somewhat more about seagulls than I really cared to know, but on further reflection I realized that I was manifesting the

rather stuffy and superior attitude which we humans all too often direct at our inarticulate fellow creatures.

The seagull in fact is a marvelous bird. Unlike many other species, it is entirely free of socialistic tendencies. It is in fact a capitalist bird, a rugged individualist with a highly developed regard for the sanctity of private property. Every family of seagulls has its own nesting land, about 7 feet square, and the family estate is absolutely inviolable. To invade one of these private preserves is the gravest of offenses, punishable by swift and stern retaliation.

In addition to his sound economic doctrine, the seagull is guided by rigorous standards of morality in his private life. Courting is conducted with dignity and ceremony and, once wed, the seagull is monogamous and devoted to family. Divorce is unknown and scandals of the sort which rock great empires in the world of men are considered by seagulls to be in unacceptably bad taste.

More impressive still is the high regard which seagull society holds for the principle of seniority. Every gullery has its venerated senior citizens, newcomers working their way up, and a few members whom everybody is allowed to pick on. Under the seniority system the young chick is required to keep his neck tucked in because a high head and a stretched neck is a status symbol among gulls. Nothing is more infuriating to an adult than the sight of a juvenile with his neck stuck out. This is the ultimate in presumption and the bumptious youngster who holds his head high is likely to be struck dead by an adult who sees him. Where, Mr. President, outside a gullery and the U.S. Senate, is the principle of seniority more faithfully observed?

The most ingenious and civilized of seagull folkways are the rules of chivalrous combat. A head held high is the most heinous of offenses, but so long as a gull holds his neck in, he is immune from attack, even if he invades the private property of another bird. The tucked-in head is a permanently available form of diplomatic immunity, sacred and inviolable. There is no real equivalent to it in human society except for certain rather limited forms of political asylum for heretics and dissenters. Surely with our superior mental endowment we humans ought to be able to devise a form of protection for our free thinkers and dissenters as safe and as convenient as the tucked-in neck.

When seagulls do actually fight, they seldom go beyond ceremonial expressions of hostility. When two enemies face each other, they are likely to stand puffing out their wings. One or the other commits the vulgar provocation of leaning over a neighbor's grass. So terrifying is this act that the fight usually ends at this point. The gravest of conflicts occurs, however, at the point of whacking one's neighbor.

It takes little imagination to conceive of the benefits which might accrue to humanized techniques of rivalry.

vated a creature as man, but certainly we should be able to devise suitable forms of ceremonial combat. Consider, for example, the Battle of Agincourt. It would have been almost as exciting and a great deal safer if the English had tipped their arrows with suction cups instead of sharp metal points.

Or consider the hydrogen bomb. Would it not be a fine thing if we could agree with the Russians to replace all our nuclear bombs with smoke bombs—huge smoke bombs which could set off immense unradioactive mushroom clouds and even make a tremendous noise but to do so without a lethal explosion? Surely it is not beyond the genius of modern science to invent such a weapon, one which would permit us the fun and excitement of nuclear war without getting killed.

But all this, I suppose, is idle nonsense, suitable enough for the mindless sea gull but hardly worthy of the most exalted of God's creatures.

And yet, perhaps ratification of the test ban treaty may be one small step toward learning how to keep our necks in.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. President, the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations has reminded us of the remarkable performance of the sea gull. I should like to invite attention to the fact that there is another bird which occasionally performs in a most remarkable fashion—the stork.